

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION**

**Please replace the paragraph on page 47, lines 20-28, with the following amended paragraph:**

The refractive index of the refractive index matching mixture **R** in a temperature range of -30 °C to +70 °C is made not more than that of the respective claddings **363** and **373** of the HF **361** and the SMF **371**, to prevent a quasi-core from being formed adjacent to the end face **361a** by the refractive index matching mixture **R** invading from the end face **361a** of the HF **361** into the air holes **364**, and thereby prevent the occurrence of optical coupling phenomena from the original cores, i.e., the respective cores ~~363~~ 362 and ~~373~~ 372 of the HF **361** and the SMF **371**.

**Please replace the paragraph on page 51, lines 2-11, with the following amended paragraph:**

For this reason, in the optical fiber connection portion **301**, in a temperature range of -30 °C to +70 °C in practical use, optical coupling phenomena can be prevented from occurring from the original cores, i.e., the respective cores ~~363~~ 362 and ~~373~~ 372 of the HF **361** and the SMF **371**. In other words, the effective core diameter of the connected HF **361**, i.e., the mode field diameter (MFD) is not varied before/after the connection, which therefore results in a small connection loss of the HF **361** and the SMF **371**. Accordingly, the HF **361** and SMF **371** can be connected with a low loss.